



September 15, 2011

Falls Prevention Activities Planned; Falls Are Leading Cause of Injury Related ER Visits for Seniors Over Age 65

Activities are scheduled throughout September and October to highlight falls prevention education for seniors. "Falls are the leading cause of injury-related emergency room visits and hospital admissions for Marylanders over the age of 65—but are highly preventable," said Odile Saddi, director of the County's Area Agency on Aging. In 2010, there were 3,294 calls to 9-1-1 attributed to falls by individuals over the age of sixty. Nearly 2,100 of the falls were by individuals over the age of 80.

Falls can cause serious injuries, such as hip fractures, which can require long-term recovery in a hospital or nursing home and reduce the quality of life for individuals. Falls are also a costly injury, resulting in more than \$225 million in hospital out-patient visits and hospital admissions charges for Marylanders in 2009.

County Executive Isiah Leggett's Senior Subcabinet Advisory Group on Health and Wellness is working to encourage government and community groups to sponsor falls prevention activities for the public.

Upcoming falls prevention activities are listed below:

- Holiday Park Senior Center offers three exercise classes this month that exercises for falls prevention: *Chair Yoga*; *Yoga for Everyone*; and *Balancing Act*. Call 240-777-4999.
- September 18: Jewish Community Center's Health Expo will include Wii Balance and osteoporosis screenings. Call 301-881-0100 for information.
- September 19: Holy Cross Hospital Senior Source: *Falls Prevention Education*. Call 301-754-8800 for information.
- September 21: Holy Cross Hospital Senior Source: *Falls Risk Assessments*. Call 301-754-8800 for information.
- September 23: *Gait & Balance Workshop* at Holiday Park Sr. Center. Call 240-777-4999 for information.
- October 3: Holy Cross Hospital Senior Source: *Better Balance* Exercise Classes. Call 301-754-8800 for information.
- October 4: *New Bone Builders* exercise class to increase bone density, strength and balance begins at Wisconsin Place Community Center. Call 240-777-1350 for information.
- October 31-December 5: OASIS offers *Free From Falls*. Call 301-469-6800, extension 211 for information.
- Jewish Community Center's ACE program focusing on Science and Technology will feature aging-in-place expert Louis Tenenbaum on falls prevention. Call 301-348-3864 for information.

For information from the National Institutes on Health related to decreasing falls risk, go to <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/> and search for "Falls and Older Adults."

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Stay Fit to Prevent Falls in Montgomery County

Falls are a major threat to the health and well being of older residents. More than 1/3 of older adults fall each year, often leading to injuries that reduce activity and independence. The good news is that falls can be prevented. Learn more below.

Did you know?	Here's what to do:
Get Educated People who take 4 or more medicines may be at risk of falling.	Discuss the side effects of your medicines and potential drug interactions with your doctor or pharmacist. Attend a seminar on falls prevention. Call 240-777-3000 (TTY: 240-777-4575) to learn about an event near you.
Get Screened One way to prevent falls is to know your personal risk of falling.	Discuss your personal risk of falling with your doctor or physical therapist. Hazards in your home may increase your risk of falling.
Get Fit Sitting too much is a falls risk.	Stand up and move! Strong legs and good balance help prevent falls.

Falls Prevention Month planners: Montgomery County Aging and Disability Services and Departments of Recreation, Fire and Rescue, and Housing Opportunities Commission; Sunrise Assisted Living; Circle of Rights; Holy Cross Hospital; Suburban Hospital; Alzheimer's Association; Village of Friendship Heights; Jewish Community Center; Vital Living Committee; OASIS; Adventist Healthcare and mindRAMM and Associates, LLC.

Local Resources for Fall Prevention

The organizations listed on the back are eager to help you prevent a fall. Here are the types of programs they may offer:

Exercise Opportunities

Ask about classes that aim to build strength and improve balance, or classes which target conditions you may have, such as arthritis, osteoporosis and Parkinson's disease.

Health Education

Ask about classes or lectures related to falls prevention.

Screenings and Assessments

Take advantage of opportunities to have your vision, hearing, gait and balance checked.

Medication Management

Pharmacists give lectures and periodically review medicines, checking for appropriate dosing; problems caused by interactions between medicines and other substances such as alcohol; and other issues that could leave you at risk of a fall.

Home Safety Checks

Be sure to check for hazards in your home that could put you at risk of falling. You can access a safety checklist at www.cdc.gov. Go to the site and search for "Check for Safety: A Home Fall Prevention Checklist."